

The Asian earth quake and tidal wave tragedy certainly puts any grain problems in perspective and the fact that analysts view the disaster as a negative for the corn markets seems irrelevant compared to the tragedy. Corn did start the week fractionally higher but that came as a result of spillover buying from soybeans and some light speculative profit taking. Weekly export inspection numbers provided little fuel for bullish traders and the 16.2 million bushels were in line with expectations. In fact it was viewed as bearish when the lower ocean freight rates and the weak dollar are taken into account. By the middle of the week corn trade was at a near standstill because most traders are on vacation. However, on Wednesday corn took a hit due to disappointing exports and the latest USDA hog and pig report showing that pork producers are expanding their herds at a slower than expected pace. Cash business in the U.S. was slow because of the holiday. Last week Soybeans moved to a 3 month high! The strength has come from technical buying, lack of farmer activity and terrific export business. The bad news is that if the South American weather remains good it will be difficult to keep the beans in the \$5 range and will likely slip into the high \$4 region. On Monday speculative buying, in both the commercial and the non-commercial categories, sent prices rising. Buying in soybean oil was tied loosely to concerns over Indonesia’s palm oil industry following the weekend’s tsunami in Southeast Asia and Africa. Reports of an early harvest in Brazil’s state of Mato Grosso put a dent in the rise on Tuesday and on Wednesday more of the gains were given back due to cash market weakness (one trader said the basis was “cracking a little”) and persistent pressure from this year’s huge crop. A possible big South American crop for 2005 will always keep things in check. Wheat trade had some support last week but we do not have enough to challenge the November highs. This week prices seemed resistant to move but some strength was attributed to fund buying but once they stopped small amounts of trading activity drug prices lower. On Tuesday and Wednesday wheat prices were influenced by corn and beans and news that Pakistan bought Australian wheat kept the wraps on any chance of a move upwards. In all markets futures trading is so thin that a couple of orders can move prices significantly, so, if you see huge moves in the next few days – don’t worry – there is probably no fuel behind the fire. Happy New Year!

BASIS TABLE

LOCATION	CORN BASIS		SOYBEAN BASIS		WHEAT BASIS	
	CASH (Mar05)	NEW (Dec05)	CASH (Jan05)	NEW(Nov05)	CASH(Mar04)	NEW(Jul05)
Western MD	+5	n/a	-42	n/a	-1	n/a
Central MD	+5	+13	-36	-30	-29	-28
Southern MD	+9	n/a	-30	n/a	n/a	-43
Upper E. Sh	+11	n/a	-20	n/a	n/a	-39
Lower E. Sh	+29	n/a	-15	n/a	-11	-38

WEEKLY CROP WEATHER SUMMARY

MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

The Maryland Agriculture Statistics Services wishes everyone a

Happy, Holiday Season!

We would like to take this time to thank the elevators, livestock auctions, University of MD Cooperative Extension and USDA, AMS for providing the weekly data. The information and support that you provide makes it possible to create a useful marketing tool for agricultural producers.

THE CROP WEATHER WILL RESUME IN APRIL 2005

CASH GRAINS - REGIONAL - (\$/bu) DEALERS AVERAGE CASH QUOTES									
Grade and Commodity	#2 Y Shelled Corn		#2 Yellow Soybeans		#2 Red Winter Wheat		#3 Barley		
Date	12/21	12/28	12/21	12/28	12/21	12/28	12/21	12/28	
Western Md	2.03	2.08	5.00	5.05	3.03	3.03	1.83	1.83	
Central MD	2.04	2.05	5.07	5.11	3.18	2.75	2.15	2.15	
Southern MD	2.11	2.12	5.17	5.17	----	----	----	----	
Upper E. Shore	2.24	2.25	5.22	5.27	----	----	----	----	
Lower E. Shore	2.29	2.32	5.30	5.34	2.95	2.93	1.76	1.76	
Soybean Meal Lower Eastern Shore Dealer's Average Cash quotes (\$/ton)									
Date	12/21		12/28		Date		12/21		12/28
48% Soybean Meal	189.00		189.00		44% Soybean Meal		177.00		177.00
FORWARD CONTRACT PRICE-REGIONAL (\$/BU) for Harvest delivery Dealer's Avg Quotes									
Grade and Commodity	#2 Y Shelled Corn		#2 Yellow Soybeans		#2 Red Winter Wheat		#3 Barley		
Date	12/21	12/28	12/21	12/28	12/21	12/28	12/21	12/28	
Western Md	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	
Central MD	2.48	2.49	5.37	5.37	3.02	3.03	----	----	
Southern MD	----	----	----	---	2.89	2.88	1.65	1.65	
Upper E Shore	----	----	----	----	2.89	2.92	1.65	1.65	
Lower E Shore	----	----	----	----	2.94	2.93	1.65	1.65	
GRAIN FUTURES- Chicago Board of Trade (\$/bu) Settle - Dec 28, 2004									
Corn		Soybeans		Wheat		Soybean Meal ¹			
05Mar	207.00	05Jan	551.20	05Mar	305.00	05Jan	161.90		
05May	214.60	05Mar	546.60	05May	311.20	05Mar	162.20		
05Jul	222.00	05May	551.00	05Jul	318.20	05May	164.80		
05Sep	229.40	05Jul	558.40	05Sep	325.00	05Jul	167.60		
05Dec	238.40	05Aug	560.40	05Dec	333.40	05Aug	169.10		
06Mar	245.20	05Sep	561.00	06Mar	338.40	05Sep	170.50		

¹ \$/ton

HAY AND STRAW							
New Holland, PA - \$/ton - Dec 27, 2004 - 135 Loads							
Alfalfa 50.00-200.00		Mixed Hay 13.00-255.00		Timothy 95.00-150.00		Ballage 15.00-40.00	
				Orchardgrass 50.00-205.00		Straw 110.00-190.00	
Westminster, MD - \$/bale - Dec 28, 2004 - 300 Lots							
Alfalfa 2.50-5.00		Alfalfa Mix 1.10-6.30		Timothy 1.00-3.60		Timothy Mix 1.00.3.10	
				Grass Mix 1.00-4.00		Straw 1.00-3.00	
						Mulch .40-1.10	
Southern, MD - Regional Farmers' Market - \$/bale -							
Next Sale January 1, 2005							
POULTRY (Grade A) - Week Ending - Jan 01, 2005							
		Current Week		Week Ago		Month Ago	
NY Wtd Avg. (Fryers)		65.77		64.18		63.08	
12 City Composite		68.12		68.26		68.36	
						Year Ago	
						60.91	
						65.73	
LAMBS - Westminster, MD - \$/cwt - Dec 28, 2004							
50- 70 lbs		120.00-180.00		110-130 lbs		92.50-130.00	
80-100 lbs		115.00-150.00				Sheep	
						42.00-72.50	
TERMINAL MARKETS HOGS - Dec 28, 2004				DIRECT MARKET HOGS - Westminster, MD - Dec 28, 2004			
Base Price Range (\$/cwt) a.m.		Carcass Basis Base 185 lb Hog		Sows (1-3) 300-449 lbs		Butcher Hogs 315-360 lbs 51.00-53.25	
Iowa, Minn		54.00-63.85		33.20-48.40		Sows 39.00-47.25	
Eastern Cornbelt		54.00-62.00		30.00-48.53		Millsboro, DE Market Hogs - (\$/cwt) - Next Sale Jan 18, 2005	
FEEDER PIGS - (\$/cwt) -							
Gumboro, DE -				New Holland, PA -			
Head:		Trend:		Head:		Trend:	
		Next Sale Jan 18, 2005				CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY	
CATTLE-LIVE FUTURES-Chicago Mercantile Exchange (\$/cwt) - Dec 28, 2004				HOGS-LEAN FUTURES-Chicago Mercantile Exchange (\$/cwt) - Dec 28, 2004			
Dec04		92.00		Jun05		82.05	
Feb05		90.55		Aug05		81.18	
Apr05		87.90		Oct05		81.85	
Feb05		73.75		Jun05		74.10	
Apr05		73.33		Jul05		70.08	
May05		71.53		Aug05		66.25	
STOCKER-FEEDER CATTLE - (\$/cwt)							
Winchester, VA - Dec 27, 2004				Westminster, MD - Dec 28, 2004			
Steers		CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY		Steers (M&L)		400-500 lbs 77.00- 97.00	
						700-800 lbs 68.50- 78.00	
						900 lbs 73.00- 80.00	
				Heifers (M&L)		200-300 lbs 70.00 90.00	
						400-500 lbs 78.00- 93.00	
						600-700 lbs 65.00- 68.00	
Heifers				Hols Bull Calves		90-100 lbs 120.00-170.00	
				Returned to farm		105-115 lbs 127.50-157.50	
						130-140 lbs 122.50-132.50	
Lancaster, New Holland & Vintage - Week Ending - Jan 01, 2005							
Bull, Holstein		HOLIDAY		Plainer		HOLIDAY	
Heifers, Hols				Plainer			
SLAUGHTER CATTLE (\$/cwt)							
Westminster, MD - Dec 28, 2004							
Fed Steers				Fed Heifers			
H-Ch		85.75-91.75		H-Ch		86.75- 91.25	
L-Ch		82.00-85.00		Ch		82.00- 86.00	
Select		77.00-82.00		Calves			
Cows				Slaughter Calves		50.00-100.00	
Slaughter Cows		56.00-62.00		Jerseys		14.00- 50.00	
Breakers		49.50-55.00		Holstein Heifers		210.00-495.00	
Boners		40.50-49.00					
Slow Pen		38.75-Down					
Lancaster, New Holland & Vintage - Week Ending - Jan 01, 2005							
CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY							

For more information about this report, call 410-841-5740 or write:

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
50 Harry S Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. Governor
Michael S. Steele Lt. Governor
Lewis R. Riley Secretary of Agriculture
John R. Brooks, DVM Deputy Secretary